

Achieving Community Certification

The Governor's Task Force for a Healthier Louisiana is charged with the responsibility of reviewing and selecting parish community coalitions as recipients of the Governor's Community Certification Award. This award recognizes the parish as a "Partner for a Healthy Louisiana." The award also serves to recognize those parish coalitions who develop broad-based community partnerships that represent the needs of the disadvantaged and whose mission is prevention based.

An application for certification must demonstrate that the community **is addressing at least two objectives from the Louisiana's ten (10) Leading Health Indicators (LHI's)**. These objectives must be measurable and realistic. Verification that a community assessment, or its equivalent, has been used to determine the community's health objectives must also be included.

Getting Started: Benchmarks For Becoming a "Parish Partner for a Healthy Louisiana"

All community health promotion activities require a great deal of planning and commitment. This outline is meant to provide a community group with the steps that will lead them through the planning process to certification as a "Parish Partner for a Healthy Louisiana." Community groups are encouraged to contact the Office of Healthy Louisiana 2010 for support and technical assistance at any point during the process.

I. Establish a Steering Committee

Form a steering group of 5-10 leaders to set an initial strategy for organizing a task force and invite others to join the planning group. The purpose of the **steering committee** is to facilitate the Healthy Louisiana 2010 process to perform the Community Health and Resource Assessment and ensure that the partnership achieves certification.

II. Perform a Community Health and Resources Assessment

- 1) Contact the Healthy Louisiana 2010 Office for a parish profile and secondary data. Examine other available data on community health status that are regularly administered by local hospitals, United Way and other community agencies and organizations.
- 2) Recruit a workgroup to help survey various community groups, conduct a community forum and focus groups, and administer surveys to collect critical information from your community members. Templates of community surveys are provided in your Healthy Louisiana 2010 Community Guidebook.
- 3) Identify and assess community resources (assets mapping).

III. Convene the Partnership to form the Community Advisory Council

Select a group of 20-40 people who represent a broad spectrum of the community to form the **Community Advisory Council**. Persons should be selected from various private organizations, governmental agencies, neighborhoods, socioeconomic, and ethnic groups.

- 1) Present the findings of the Community Assessment.
- 2) Establish priorities for the community partnership to address. The process to establish priorities should include the broad-based group that will be the core membership of the partnership. The priorities should be determined by the findings of the community assessment and other criteria established by the steering committee.

- 3) Develop an organizational structure and hold regular meetings.
- 4) Develop a plan to expand the partnership membership to bring in stakeholders and partners to work with the partnership to address the priority issues.
- 5) Inform the public about the partnership.

IV. Develop an action plan:

Work plans must include:

- A plan to address at least 2 objectives from Louisiana's ten (10) Leading Health Indicators. The objectives must be from two separate Focus Areas and must be measurable and realistic.
- Strategies to reach the objectives. These strategies can focus on individual behavior change, changes in the environment or changes in policies.
- Strategies to build coalition skills of partnership members.
- Methods to involve community members in program development, implementation and evaluation.
- A mechanism to keep the public informed about the work of the partnership.
- A method to secure resources (funding, volunteers, in-kind support) to assure success of action plan.
- An established set timeframe for implementing projects.
- Identification of partner roles in carrying out strategies.

V. Apply for a Healthy Louisiana Partnership Certification

Contact the Healthy Louisiana 2010 Office to get more information about the certification process. Completed applications are due in the Healthy Louisiana 2010 Office in (TBA) . The Governor's Task Force for a Healthier Louisiana reviews the applications and determines eligibility for certification.

Implement plans. Monitor progress. Evaluate projects. Take time to celebrate successes!

VI. Standards for Certification and/or Re-certification

The following list parallels the guidance set out in the Healthy Louisiana (HL) benchmarks for certification. The HL partnership applying for certification or re-certification should demonstrate some strength in each of these areas to meet the minimal standards for certification and/or re-certification. For parishes that are eligible for the TBA Award and the TBA Award for Excellence, the HL partnership should be exemplary in each area, clearly demonstrating performance beyond these minimal requirements for certification and/or re-certification.

- ***Alignment with 2010 health objectives:*** Must have planned and implemented activities that work toward achieving at least two different 2010 objectives (from two different focus areas). See [Healthy Louisiana 2010 health objectives](#).
- ***Reducing Health Disparities:*** Action plans/objectives/interventions must target populations with health disparities.
- ***Action Plans:*** Must have long-term objectives (10 year) and short-term objectives (5-year) that are measurable and have a baseline. The strategies must have multiple levels of interventions (i.e., policy, various community settings, media campaign) and be effective

in achieving the desired outcomes stated in the objectives. Strategies and objectives should have evaluation plans that include impact and/or outcomes.

- **Membership:** HL partnerships must have diversity represented in leadership committee and full partnership. Membership must represent race/ethnicity of community, a wide variety of agencies (government and not-for-profit), businesses, churches, schools, gender, sex, geographic (various parts of the county), community members and community leaders. Community members must participate in the decision making process.
- **Leadership:** a) Must demonstrate collaborative leadership (shared leadership among various agencies/community members/etc). b) HL partnership should not be the work of a sole agency. c) HL partnerships applying for re-certification must demonstrate that leadership is shared and has evolved to include others beyond the original lead agencies. d) HL partnership has influential community leaders supporting its work.
- **Community Assessment:** Must demonstrate that the HL partnership has conducted or used a recent community assessment to determine priorities and identify priority populations. Community members should help decide priorities.
- **Communication:** HL partnership must report to the community and make presentations to various boards and commissions about its work. HL partnership must have a communication plan that includes media and/or a marketing campaign (have HL partnership logo, etc.) HL partnership must be working toward high visibility in community.
- **Support and Commitment of HL members:** Letters of support demonstrate commitment to HL Partnership. Actions Plans clearly demonstrate wide variety of agencies/organizations have roles and responsibilities for the strategies.
- **Funding:** HL partnership should have some ongoing financial support or documentation of a financial plan to seek funding.

Benefits of Certification:

Certification provides statewide and national recognition of the valuable work of community members and agencies. The Governor, or her/his designated official will present the award at an annual conference to be sponsored by Healthy Louisiana 2010. Member of parish coalitions, state and local governments, public health leaders, community leaders, etc., will be invited to attend.

Each community that qualifies for certification will receive a plaque recognizing the achievements of their collaborative efforts toward preventing disease/conditions and each member of the certified “Healthy Louisiana Partnership” will receive a personalized certificate signed by the Governor.

Benefits of the Community Certification Award include:

- 1) Certification provides statewide and national recognition of the valuable work of community members and agencies.
- 2) Each community will receive a plaque recognizing the achievements of their collaborative efforts toward creating awareness for preventive health.
- 3) Each member of the certified partnership will receive a personalized certificate signed by and presented by the Governor, or her/his designee.

- 4) The certification process helps provide more focus on partnership objectives and activities in the community.
- 5) The certification award attracts grant opportunities. Certified partnerships have enhanced credibility with possible funding sources such as at the local, state and federal level, as well as many foundations.
- 6) The certification award provides an opportunity for increasing visibility within the community.
- 7) Increased awareness of preventative public health practices will occur through proper media planning, (the HL 2010 program can assist coalitions with media planning, news release templates, etc.)
- 8) Recruitment of more volunteers due to higher visibility and increased activity.
- 9) Increased community participation in activities will occur through public forums, media coverage of activities, etc.
- 10) The process and certification award will also help sustain the partnerships and keep the momentum of the coalition going.

VII. Timelines & Applications

Thank you for your interest in becoming a certified “Partner for a Healthier Louisiana.” We commend your success in organizing a community-based response to health and safety issues. The Healthy Louisiana 2010 office will continue to provide support throughout the life of your community partnership, even after your partnership has been established. Please continue to search our website for information and services, or contact us at your convenience.

In order to submit your application for certification or re-certification, we ask that you do the following:

- Contact your [Regional Consultant](#), or the Healthy Louisiana 2010 Office of your intent to submit for certification.
- Attend a certification or re-certification orientation session. (*If you miss the statewide orientation, please contact your Regional Consultant for a one-on-one session.*)
- Download and complete a certification or re-certification application.
- Adhere to the required [timeline](#).
- Submit a completed application to the Healthy Louisiana 2010 Office.
- The [Governor's Task Force](#) is charged with the responsibility for reviewing the applications and awarding the certifications based on certain standards and awards.

At first glance, this certification application may seem quite long. However, you will find that by assembling information about your task force, you will be able to use it in a variety of ways. Some ways of using the information from this document are for:

Grant Writing/Securing Funding - The information you compile will help you respond to many of the same questions asked by other grantors.

Community Presentations - As you go through the Healthy Louisiana process, you are able to organize your community around a joint vision and plan. This plan can then be presented to parish residents, Parish Commissioners, Board of Health, Hospital Board of Trustees, etc.

Planning and Evaluation - The findings from the community assessment will help you develop a plan for addressing issues in your community and later evaluate the success of your efforts.